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## POST-METAPHYSICS: TOWARD A POSTHUMAN SPECULATIVE SCHIZOREALISM

PHILOFICTION HORROR, MACHINES, METAPHYSICS, NULLIFICATION, SCHIZO

*The schizophrenic's extreme transference helps us to understand, the reasons that his world is so terrifying is that he sees it in many ways unblurred by repression.*

—Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*

Even though there is much to disagree with in Freud, Brown, and Becker; Adler, Rank, Jung, Fromm, Lacan, Deleuze/Guattari and others – each plunged into this strange amalgam of human

misery and neurotic / schizophrenic ploys humans have invented in private and public to escape the truth of existence in a grand denial of reality. Their language and concepts may be dated and part of a humanistic discourse we've been leaving for some time but there are things we should gather up and keep in their darkened view of existential man. Parts of that heritage remain even as we overturn their anthropomorphisms and transform their conceptuality into the posthuman nexus.

After all we still need their insights if not their dogmas and outmoded frameworks on the 'human condition'. In many ways our posthuman age is barely scratching the surface of this transitional phase in the midst of our escape vectors out of the human into the inhuman future. A few aspects of humanistic thought will remain as 'transitional objects' of thought to guide us through the breakup of our Western Metaphysical Reality System. Plato and Aristotle held till the Renaissance and beyond, then came modernity and the age of critique which is just now crumbling and vanishing as we enter the unknow portals of the posthuman matrix. We've yet to see a definitive statement for this 'transitional age', but hints of it lie in the darkened hollows of many thinkers as they plunder the past for the new.

The literature of desire and affective intensities may be outworn now, but it's grappling with the coded interweaving of the human condition in all its brokenness still remains. The heart of the pessimal tradition is that "we see too much" what the world is unbound by the repressions of millennia past and the 'Human Security System' (Land). The Western systems of belief and reality are crumbling, and with them the civilization that was built of those lies and fictions. We see it in the insanity of war, terror, and return of religious consciousness in our era. As T.S. Eliot put it: "Humans cannot bear too much reality." To do so is to go mad in psychosis which spells the 'death of the human'. So, we remain mere husks of the 'human condition' trapped in the repetition of an infernal thought, bound to and outmoded metaphysical regime that seeks to entrap us in a reality system that is itself dead leaving us zombie like puppets of a dead thought.

## **THE METAPHYSICAL AGE IS DEAD, LONG LIVE METAPHYSICS**

Thinking about the so-called death of philosophy in our time it comes down to a rejection of the reality framework that has held us in its clutches for two-thousand years of human-centric weavings. Our belief in our exceptionalism, that humans were the exception to the rule, escaping our animal heritage and living like Titans caught in-between heaven and earth, fully aware of our creatureliness and yet believing we could escape its finality.

From Plato-Aristotle to Heidegger-Satre we saw the grand metaphysical schemes of the philosopher's question existence, find it wanting and critiquing its delusions and illusions. One could find the same in China, India, and other cultures and civilization but I deal only with the one I live in. Religious consciousness at its extremity leads to psychosis, but then philosophy led to the fear of this very thing: madness. We were taught to fear the terrors of reality, to consider it mere appearance covering over something else, some other transcendent scheme of things; another world, of eternal Forms, Ideas, the Real, Void, Darkness, Light, Absolute... So many

metaphysical schemes to rid us of the world and open us to the truth of some other world of Beauty, Truth, and the Good. Metaphysics was for the sick and weak, a way to overcome our creatureliness in a world of delusion. The science grew out of this world of thought and with many of its same goals of dispelling the delusions and illusions by which men have lived by, and yet it too succumbed to the very delusions of the metaphysicians caught in the flytrap of our own evolutionary praxis, bound to the train of thought and feeling that seeks to safe and secure world against the madness.

Humans *as humans* cannot hope to escape this circle of their own critical gaze, but we see exiting the human and its childhood of metaphysics is upon us: the posthuman is this exit. A new thought beyond the human is arising, a new post-metaphysics that purports to escape the vectors of metaphysical man. It would take a lengthy book to discuss this new world of thought. Many strange insights are already being aired in the halls of the academy and sciences drifting in this direction. All I can do is venture into its opening gamut, discuss the fragmented charm of its disquisitions. In the no-man's land in-between two metaphysical worlds we live unknowing of what is coming even as we escape what has been.

Posthumanism and Post-Metaphysical thought offers us a view beyond the systems of critique, beyond the gaze onto the past of metaphysics, offering us a posthuman gaze into the future that is coming at us at the speed of thought itself. Even as we break free of the reality systems that have locked us in the 'human condition' we are caught in the clutches of fear and terror of the new. To diagnose our plight is to grant that we remain in the dark unable to see through this futural mirror without the sparks of former beliefs, concepts, and transitional fractures of reality testing. Maybe that's all I can do is test the thought being formulated now in the speculative worlds of literature and post-philosophical and post-metaphysical science fiction, horror — the weird and eerie and uncanny: the worlds that deal with the liminal darkness and light.

If the core of metaphysics from Plato to Heidegger was this overcoming of the 'human condition' – its finitude, etc., then the core of the post-metaphysical man is to accept his creatureliness, his finitude, his existential situation as animal in an inhuman cosmos. We do not seek some escape, some immortal becoming god or redemption from finitude into whatever form of immortalization. From religion to philosophy to transhumanism the immortality project was the driver against this realm of change and death. Humans sought a way out of this metamorphic realm through any and all leaps of 'faith' in one or a number of fashions. In our age the pseudo-science of Transhumanist thought is the culmination of the whole metaphysical worldview. But there is another...

Posthumanism is not about saving humanity, but of becoming inhuman, monstrous, and other: a path Outside the circle of the human security system and its traps. Nick Land was on to something,

*Philosophy has an affinity with despotism, due to its predilection for Platonic-fascist top-down solutions that always screw up viciously. Schizoanalysis works differently. It avoids Ideas, and sticks to diagrams: networking software for accessing bodies without organs. BwOs, machinic*

*singularities, or tractor fields emerge through the combination of parts with (rather than into) their whole; arranging composite individuations in a virtual/actual circuit. They are additive rather than substitutive, and immanent rather than transcendent: executed by functional complexes of currents, switches, and loops, caught in scaling reverberations, and fleeing through intercommunications, from the level of the integrated planetary system to that of atomic assemblages. Multiplicities captured by singularities interconnect as desiring-machines; dissipating entropy by dissociating flows, and recycling their machinism as self-assembling chronogenic circuitry.<sup>1</sup>*

Philosophy was a trap to enslave us to the dictates of a fantasy world against the reality of what is by inventing a defense mechanism *against reality*. Against Plato's two-world metaphysics of a dualistic world of appearances set against the eternal world of Ideas we are offered in schizoanalysis diagrammatic paths in-between. The future in this cybermachinism breaks free of the metaphysical bonds of outworn conceptuality and lift the veil on the positivization of unconscious desire unbound by human want and need. A future unbound of the human altogether: "Nothing human makes it out of the near-future." This is not a literal death of humanity, but its migration into machinic civilization. This cyborgizational transition may go on for hundreds if not thousands of years as we enter into new relations with the cosmos. But the strange thing we are in our creatureliness is knowing it is in transition rather than an end point reached. Against the whole metaphysical tradition that placed humanity at the pinnacle of creation the new posthuman thought situates humans in a flow of schizophrenic play of forces unbound from metaphysics altogether.

The pessimist tradition of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Bataille, and Land among others opened a door onto this transition beyond humanity into the posthuman. We do not have a definitive map of anti-philosophy to guide us, only the various trends in the strange amalgamation of thought surrounding the 'posthuman' in speculative philosophy and science fiction, the weird and horror. It's there that we will find the keys to a new form of non-thought, a diagrammatic or non-conceptual affective and unconscious schizorealism.

To clarify:

*I advocate a posthuman anti-philosophy of immanence and diagrammatic schizorealism that seeks to remain with existence against all thought that seeks to escape into some void, heaven, eternal realm of Ideas, etc. We are and will remain in this quantum world without remainder, even as we decay into quantum particles as we die... we remain this thing. This is not a return to pre-Critical thought and some mad entry into the energetic cosmos, but rather an emergence from the 'human condition' into that of the 'posthuman condition' that seeks to lift the repressive mechanisms of defense that have hidden the truth from us for far too long.*

*One reason I chose Thomas Ligotti to write on is not that I agree with him but that I disagree. He acknowledges his inability to accept the socialization process, the horror of consciousness, etc. so seeks to eliminate it and return to the void of animal consciousness: ego-death, etc. Instead for me this is an impossibility short of suicide, so for me best to accept what we are*

and push it to its limits rather than curtail its effects like Ligotti's mentor Zappfe. In this sense speculative schizorealism accepts our plight of self-reflecting nothingness and yet seeks to plunge it into a break with the metaphysical systems that bind us and trap us in human finitude: safety, security, and metaphysical traps of the 'Human Security System' (Land). In that fact I work with and against the pessimal traditions of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Freud aligning with Bataille, Deleuze, and Land against the metaphysical pessimism for a speculative schizorealism that accepts the naturalist and immanent vectors of the sciences and their quantum realities.

I'm not against concepts, instead my problem and task are that all conceptuality in its various forms has constructed systems to test reality through mathematics and natural language and yet has sought above all to eternalize it, set it in stone as if to discover once and for all a 'Theory of Everything'. There is no such thing as objective reality, no stable unified and undivided object. We live in an absolute chaos and metamorphic realm of absolute contingency without end. So, we demarcate, mark off, and make distinctions we can use to stabilize this massive chaotic stream of pulsation of the energetic cosmos. We seek through Reason and Intelligence to stabilize it into a frozen state to secure our own human condition and make it safe and predictable. Then we forget that this fiction is a map, a diagram not to be taken literally for reality, but as a mapping to help us survive in it. Instead, we take the map for/ as reality (i.e., we literalize the map and mistake it for the chaosmos surround) and enslave ourselves in its false boundaries, policing its extremities and guarding against those who seek to escape the marked off boundary through their travels into the unknown.

This is one reason why the 'fear of the unknown' is the central theme of Lovecraft's tradition in the weird, uncanny, and horror that Ligotti inherited. To open ourselves up to the unknown (Outside in) is to court madness according to the gatekeepers of our culture and civilization. They tell us not to go there, that to do so is to enter the insanity of existence, lose one's mind and in process dissolve the self-created character armor that protects one against too much reality. This sense of losing one's self-image, the destruction of the character armor, and the sense of unbinding the ego from its subservience to the socialization processes and defenses of culture and civilization is central to what I've called the tradition of the "Outlaws of Reality". Each of us probably has our own list of those who have both struggled to attain this escape from our childhood socialization process. As James Joyce once put it,

"When a man is born...there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets."

— James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

This sense of entrapment in the Human Security System of all the fictions of ideology, religion, philosophy, the sciences etc. that seek to stabilize and form a unified view of life and thought are so many fantasies revealing untruths rather than truths. We defend them to the utmost against anyone who questions the authority of their accepted knowledge. The Academy is the epitome of this gatekeeping force of society to guard us against the madness of singular thought beyond the pale. Safety in numbers is the order of the day, cowardice being the

acceptance of the staid formalism of academic philosophy.

Being a non-academic or para-academic thinker, my reading has always been eclectic rather than formalized. I turned early on the great tradition of literary critics from Samuel Johnson to Harold Bloom for my guidelines into literature, philosophy, history, and the sciences, etc. From them I learned to question everything and form my own doxa (opinions), never settling or resting in some system of thought or belief. One who studies the patterns in these various forms of literary pursuit discovers the intricate inroads of influence and how we as humans come to know our own innate tendencies toward this or that belief or non-belief. Every human is unique, and yet we can share in this mirror-lamp of culture the ways and byways of the human spirit either in and through metaphysics or against it. No one has the final answer of/on life, there will remain as many life views, philosophies, anti-philosophies, and modes-of-apprehending this thing we are as there are people who think and reflect. It will obviously never stop till we as a species stop.

The History of Madness, Mysticism, and related forms of Shamanic 'technics in ecstasy' etc. are all inroads to breaking with the cultural matrix of the 'Human Security System' (Land). It's a long road full of corpses, vampires, werewolves, shapeshifters, and failed creatures who have sought inroads into the Outside. In modernity from Blake, Van Gogh, Rimbaud, Lautremont, Artaud, Land, etc. and so many others we've seen the human push to the limits of the Outside with a tenacity to let it in, let it past the gatekeeper's security regime of socialization. Each falling along the path, but each as well furthering the old adage "fail and fail better!". This courage of our hopelessness to overcome the 'human condition' not by way of transcendence but immanence that stays with this life, this existence in all its monstrous glory.

Wouter Kusters in his *Philosophy of Madness: The Experience of Psychotic Thinking* shows the way of such inroads through an in-depth analysis of the various concepts and metaphors that mystics and philosophers have discovered, invented, and carried over from their adventures in the Outside. The unknown will remain unknowable by human language and mathematics, and yet we can use both to bridge the gap between the known and unknown like the Zen practitioner who offers a 'finger to the moon' to awaken us to the paradox of non-knowledge and the positive power of the unconscious to show forth its own indelible stamp.

Let's face it the thinkers of India, China, and other civilizations long ago discovered these inroads which in the West we are only beginning to open up too. I speak only of the Western traditions because I'm not of these other cultures so would be an amateur interpreter of their deepest knowledge. What a presumption it would be on my part to speak of these traditions which hundreds of men and women have suffered in and through to develop their own paths into the Outside. I can only attest to those of the Eurocentric world and its broken frameworks inherited from the Greek, Roman, Christian and Secular atheistic traditions.

One reason I liked and admired my friend R. Scott Bakker's six volumes in the fantasy genre (*The Prince of Nothing* and *The Aspect Emperor Series*) is that he goes against the deepest roots of metaphysical transcendence, opts to show the full madness of the 'Human Security

*System' as humans battle and fail at last. This tragic ethos unlike the Greeks' sense of Tragedy does not seek catharsis but it's opposite to accept the painful and utter annihilating truth of this monstrous reality we live in. Not to purge ourselves of its affects but to live it absolutely. To live the contingent life is to be open to reality as it is, not as our fears, apprehensions, terrors and dreads cover it over in a blanket of exit and escape, flight and false worlds.*

*The only way to live life is not to run from its darkness but to aggressively enter into its dark light, follow the annihilating flames into the crystal world of chaotica without end. The path toward a posthuman world is upon us, will you enter or take flight. Only you can answer that question. It's personal and experiential. No one can guide you into its labyrinths because there will be no human left to describe it; no maps, not guidebooks, only the fractured lives strewn along the path into its black light. It is. This is the point of Shakespeare's "Ripeness is all!": "Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all." (King Lear) To endure the pain and suffering of life to the nth degree of absolute Zero, to push oneself to the limits rather than closing them off in cowardice. To live life absolutely, rather than cutting oneself off from its dire effects. A positive negativity of being oneself, fully.*

*I resituate the epigraph:*

*The schizophrenic's extreme transference helps us to understand, the reasons that his world is so terrifying is that he sees it in many ways unblurred by repression.*

*—Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death*

But there are those who pushed through the terror into the darkness itself, become one with it and absolving the ego in the throes of existence living it out fully and intensely without cracking. I know, because I am one of those strange beings who returned. To say such a thing is for many "madness" itself, and yet for others there is a shared sense of monstrousness, a knowing that can only be known through that dark sharing and gnosis of being and doing. No one can describe it or speak of it without erring. Description fails at the boundaries of the hedgeworld in-between, where paradox, absurdity, and laughter in the realm of the trickster begins. In the Greeks world of dramatic sequence Comedy and Tragedy were two masks of the one world we live in. Most harp only on Tragedy forgetting that all dramatizations were formalized: Tragedy, Comedy, and Satyr Plays.... The Greeks had a sense of the whole thing, all of existence: the laughter of the gods and trickster of reality that encompass us all in the Comedy of Existence.

*The truth is I'm a bag of pus, a terror chamber full of biological entities (bacterium, viruses, and cellular organisms at various levels of existence from the quantum to the inorganic-organic continuum): this is the fact of organic existence, and we are the animal aware of that fact. So, how can anyone develop a philosophy or anti-philosophy both accepting that fact, and struggling to change that fact? Do we laugh or cry? is Life a Tragedy or Comedy or a Tragic-Comic absurdity, a farce and cosmic joke; or is it the Satyr's answer: "To Never Have been born may be the greatest boon of all". Or follow Socrates: "The Unexamined life is not worth living." adage. Or even Antigone: "Leave me to my own absurdity." In the end we all face death alone and in solitude. Do we laugh at the joke of life, or cry that this is a terrible fate too hard to*

| endure? Ultimately each Individual will have answer for herself, alone.

## CODA

I've often thought of satirizing the whole secular-atheistic and nihilist tradition. An opening line of the satire: "They told me the end was the end. Existence would not go on. Caput. The void, nihil, nothingness, absolute Zero to the nth degree: the vast emptiness without end, the blankness of non-being. All the usual acknowledgements of the Great Nullification. And, then it happened, the shock of death, the great trick revealed at last. I did not die, exactly. But if what you call this is death, then what was life? I continue, I move., I exist. Do not call it I exist in a place; I move through time., no, nothing like that at all. Nothing in nothing here. To even represent this as an object, as nothingness is to strain our credulity. I Am. But that's where my troubles began..."

This whole critique of all those claims within our secular system of religious belief in a godless world where death is the end, the finality of non-existence. A Satire against my own inheritance in this whole secular and atheistic humanist tradition played out as farce. It would seem fitting for one who long ago made this system of belief his own "Human Security System". I almost laugh at my own cunning acceptance of it against my Christian heritage and upbringing. This siding with the opposing camp in derision and corruption of its faith. I lived it out as a rage against the religious world as if I'd found a new faith in the sciences and humanities of the era only to discover late in life that this, too, as Nietzsche would surmise is "Human, all too human!". Just another grand narrative and fiction to help us face the unknown and unknowable universe that neither wishes us ill or good since it doesn't even exist or know we exist. This energetic cosmos of quantum physics that is in continuous creation and destruction of particles in a realm of absolute "purposiveness without purpose".

To be honest...

Let's face it I have nothing new to say or add to the vast storehouse of wisdom, I only restate it in my own lifestyle and through my personal experience. What others do with it is their business, I seek only to speak with those who know or might know of this. Any pretensions beyond that would be superfluous and egocentric in the extreme. *My modesty is the know that I do not know.*

1. Land, Nick. Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987 – 2007 . Urbanomic/Sequence Press. Kindle Edition.

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